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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Use of general temporary assistance for specific positions

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

The present note is submitted in response to the request of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in chapter I, paragraph 52, of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/7).

In its report, the Advisory Committee requested that specific information be provided to the General Assembly early in its fifty-fourth session on the disposition of resources for the specific general temporary assistance positions reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, with proposals for either temporary or established posts or an explanation of why continued use of general temporary assistance would be necessary.

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I. Introduction

1. In its consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001,[1] the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions indicated in paragraph 51 of its report[2] that general temporary assistance should not be used to compensate for reductions in established posts. At the same time, the Advisory Committee noted a number of instances where staff requirements of a continuing nature had been met or were proposed to be met through general temporary assistance rather than a request for temporary or established posts.

2. Consequently, the Advisory Committee expressed its regret that despite its previous observations that the use of general temporary assistance be limited to requirements for periods of peak workload and for maternity and sick leave, general temporary assistance continues to be used for other purposes.

3. In this connection, in paragraph 52 of its report, the Advisory Committee requested the Secretary-General to provide specific information to the General Assembly early in its fifty-fourth session on the disposition of resources for the specific general temporary assistance positions reflected in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (summarized in the annex to the present report), with proposals for either temporary or established posts or an explanation of why continued use of general temporary assistance would be necessary. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

II. Use of general temporary assistance

4. General temporary assistance has and continues to be used for the replacement of staff on maternity or sick leave or to ensure adequate staffing during peak workload periods. In addition, specific positions proposed to be funded through general temporary assistance resources are identified in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. These positions range from relatively long-term arrangements to new proposals for the biennium 2000-2001. Generally such positions have been associated with some degree of uncertainty as to the need for them to be retained in the definite future, either at their current level or in their current pattern of grades and categories.

A. Integrated Management Information System

5. Positions have been proposed to be funded through general temporary assistance for the installation, operation, support and maintenance of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) at Headquarters in the Department of Management (the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, section 27B, and the Office of Human Resources Management, section 27C) at offices away from Headquarters (Geneva, section 27E; Vienna, section 27F; and Nairobi, section 27G) and at four of the regional commissions (the Economic Commission for Africa, section 16; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, section 17; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, section 19; and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, section 20).

6. The Advisory Committee, in paragraphs V.12 and VIII.13 of its report, stated that: (a) steps must be taken to ensure that IMIS, once installed, is adequately maintained at all regional commissions; and (b) if four positions in the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts are required during the biennium 2000-2001 for core maintenance of IMIS they should be approved as temporary posts rather than financed from general temporary assistance.

7. It is the intention to eventually propose established posts for the maintenance of IMIS. However, it is felt that in the first instance, the specific positions related to IMIS should be financed from general temporary assistance until the long-term pattern of requirements for continuing maintenance and support of IMIS becomes, with experience, clearly established. This issue will be addressed in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 based on the experience gained during the biennium 2000-2001.

B. United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories

8. Under section 5, the United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO) includes 25 positions funded under general temporary assistance. Historically, since UNSCO became fully operational in 1995, it has gone through various stages related to the evolving needs of the region.

9. The Advisory Committee, in paragraph II.51 of its report, expressed the view that general temporary assistance positions at UNSCO should have been disclosed in the staffing table. In view of the evolving situation in the Occupied Territories, including the recently concluded peace accord and the reappointment of the former United Nations Special Coordinator, it would seem more appropriate to maintain the resources under general temporary assistance. This would allow the newly appointed Special Coordinator to review the needs of the office and provide optimal flexibility in securing the number and level of staff necessary to effectively implement the programme of work within the level of resources proposed.

C. Human rights

10. In section 22, Human rights, of the proposed programme budget, 19 general temporary assistance positions are proposed for the Cambodian Office for Human Rights and 2 for the Special Rapporteur in Rwanda. The nature of human rights activities in those operations is such that general temporary assistance should be retained.

D. Subregional development centres and the United Nations Office at Nairobi

11. The existing 22 support positions covering such functions as cleaners, telephone operator, messengers, drivers, etc., at the subregional development centres at the Economic Commission for Africa and the 12 security officers at the United Nations Office at Nairobi have been used over an extended period of time. This situation will be kept under review with the intention of considering them for possible conversion in 2002-2003. With respect to the additional 22 new security officer positions at the United Nations Office at Nairobi proposed for the first time in the proposed programme budget for 2000-2001, they would be monitored and will be reviewed in the context of the next proposed programme budget after the security arrangements at Gigiri can be further evaluated.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/54/6/Rev.1).

[2] Ibid., *Supplement No. 7* (A/54/7).

Annex

General temporary assistance for specific positions in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001[a]

	Under-Secretary-General	*Assistant Secretary-General*	*P-5*	*P-4*	*P-3*	*P-2/1*	*General Service*	*Security Service*	*Field Service*	*Local level*	*Total*
Section 5											
Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (para. 5.73)				3	1		1	2	3	15	25
Section 16											
Economic Commission for Africa (para. 16A.132)				1						1	2
Subregional development centres (para. 16A.121)										22	22
Section 17											
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (para. 17.116)				1						1	2
Section 19											
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (para. 19.154)				1						1	2
Section 20											
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (para. 20.64)				1						1	2
Section 22											
Human rights: Rwanda (para. 22.81)					1					1	2
Human rights: Cambodia (para. 22.81)					1					18	19
Section 27B											
Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts (para. 27B.6)			1	1	1		1				4
Section 27C											
Office of Human Resources Management (para. 27C.25)					1	1	2				4
Section 27E											
United Nations Office at Geneva (para. 27E.40)				1							1
Section 27F											
United Nations Office at Vienna (para. 27F.45)				1			1				2
Section 27G											
United Nations Office at Nairobi (paras. 27G.34 and 36)				1				34		1	36
Total	**0**	**0**	**1**	**11**	**5**	**1**	**5**	**36**	**3**	**61**	**123**

[a] Does not include positions financed under general temporary assistance for non-recurrent activities, such as the Millennium Assembly (A/54/6/Rev.1, para. 1.56).